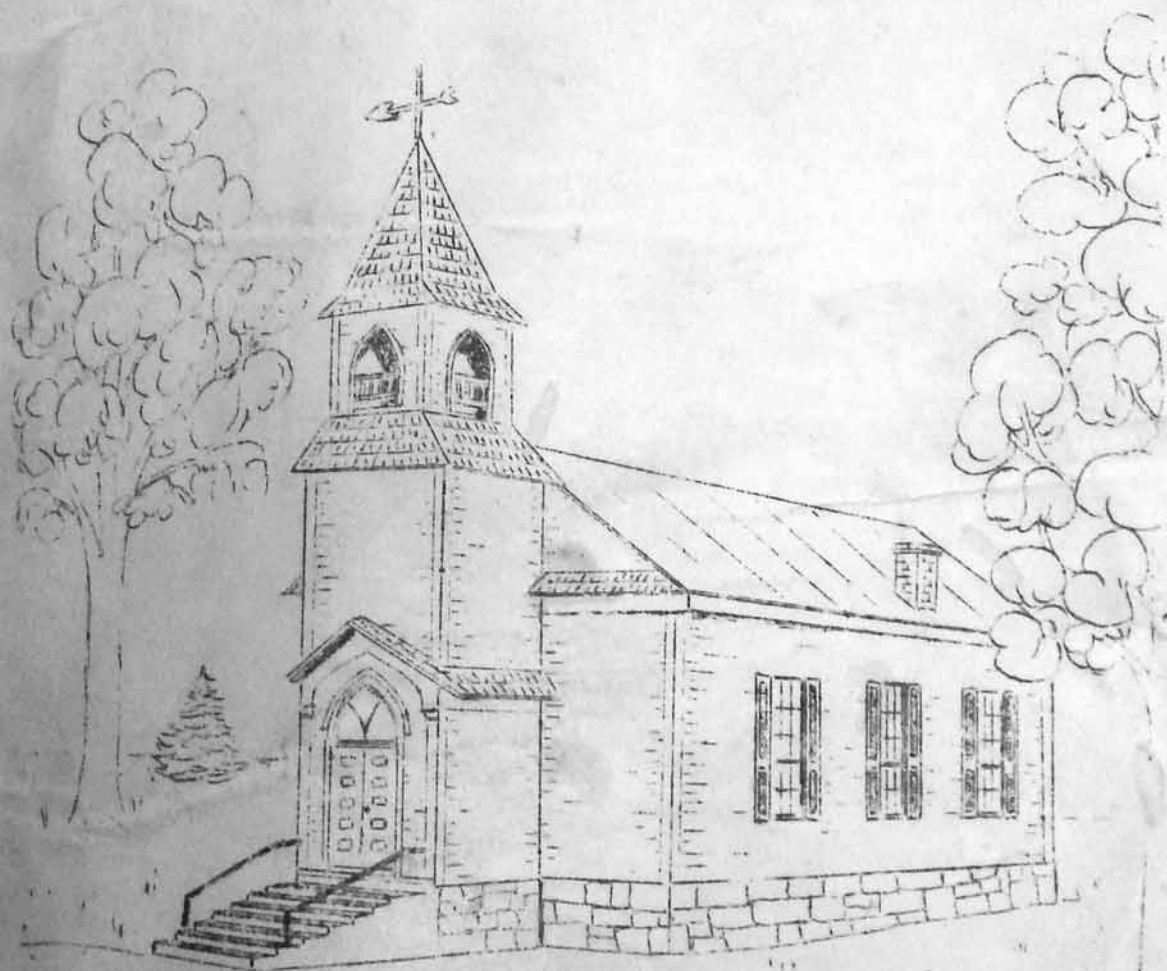


John P. Stays

MARVIN CHAPEL AND COMMUNITY



MARVIN CHAPEL CHURCH, MILL POINT, W. VA.

PRICE \$1.00

A HISTORY OF
MARVIN CHAPEL AND COMMUNITY

MILL POINT, WEST VIRGINIA

1953-54

This church and community history was started in connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary of Marvin Chapel Church. Due to requests for copies of this history it was decided to add more material and make copies available for those persons desiring them.

The profit, if any, above the actual cost of this work is to be given to the Marvin Chapel Church.

The sketches of the church were made by Wallace Gum.

The committee wishes to thank each person who helped in this work in any way.

The history committee:

F. Wilmer Ruckman, chairman
Mrs. Boyd Dilley
C. P. Pritchard
Joe Kramer

MARVIN CHAPEL AND COMMUNITY

1.

PART I

The first white man that is known to have lived in what is now the Marvin Chapel neighborhood was Stephen Sewell. He lived in a cave near the site of the church about the winter of 1750-51, while hunting and trapping in the area. However, no permanent settlers were anywhere in the Little Levels until near or slightly before 1770. One of the best known incidents of the early days after settlers came was the killing of the two young men, John and James Bridger, by Indians in the last Indian raid in what is now Pocahontas County. This occurred not far distant from the site of the church, and is thought to have been about 1784, although 1778 is sometimes given as the date.

Marvin Chapel Church was built in 1878, but the church movement and organization evidently began over a hundred years ago. The earliest record found of such an organization is when the John H. Ruckman Class was reported in the quarterly conference in October of 1846. This area was then in the Huntersville Circuit, until the Little Levels Circuit was organized in 1852, according to the minutes of these quarterly conferences. One of the earliest places of worship was probably in the log schoolhouse, which was built before the Civil War*, and is said to have been built by John H. Ruckman. This schoolhouse was near the Ruckman Cemetery, and near the old road that once went down through the "Flats". The Huntersville Circuit, which was organized in 1832, held a quarterly conference in this old schoolhouse December 20, 1851. This building was burned by the "Yankees" during the Civil War. The people of this neighborhood also likely attended church services at Hillsboro during that period of time.

Later, church services were also held in the first schoolhouse which was built on the present school grounds. The one there now is the third building on these grounds. As the first schoolhouse on these grounds was built about 1869, it was likely used about nine years for church services. Rev. C. A. Joyce was apparently the first minister to preach in the schoolhouse. He was followed by Rev. Mr. Bald-

* The War Between the States - if you prefer.

win, who is remembered as the one who prayed for rain one clear Sunday morning during a drouth, and before the service was over the rain was pouring down. Rev. J. R. Van Horn came in the spring of 1875 and was here when the church was built in 1878.

Before the Civil War, the site of the church was selected by John H. Ruckman, who owned the land before he moved away during the war. The idea of building a church was dispensed with during the war, but later the same acre of land was deeded to the M. E. Church South by Jacob F. Cackley and Mary his wife, February 17, 1877. (Deed Book No. 12, page 257).

It appears that the building of the church did not begin before 1878, other than sawing down some trees, or getting lumber. The foundation of the church was laid by Mr. George Overholt, apparently during June of 1878. The actual building of the church was done by, or under the direction of, Mr. Clark Wooddell. The building was made thirty by forty feet. The seats are made of black walnut and pine. The Bible stand and altar are made of black walnut.

Some of the people of the neighborhood were members of the Presbyterian Church. As these people were interested, and helped in the building of the church, it was agreed that they should have the privilege of having one service in it each month.

The people of the community helped build the church in many ways, such as by giving money, helping with the actual building, or giving things that might be sold or used as direct payment to the workmen or for materials. Mr. Joseph Smith was the secretary-treasurer for the building of the church, and his record book is now owned by his grandson, Joe Kramer. This record book is most interesting, and shows what each person gave and its value in 1878. A few things taken from this record are as follows: an average man's work was valued at from \$0.75 to \$1.00 a day, although the stone mason, Mr. Overholt, was paid \$2.00; plank lumber cost \$10.00 a thousand feet; 10,000 shingles were made for \$30.00; some of the things most frequently given were: corn @ 60¢ a bushel, wheat @ \$1.00 a bushel; bacon @ 10¢ a pound, also several sheep skins, and many other things were given.

A strange incident occurred about this time, and is thought by most people to have taken place during the building of the church. Two workmen, Mr. Sam Gladwell

and Mr. William Griffin were sharing a bed at the home of Mr. Smith. One night during an electric storm, a bolt of lightning killed Mr. Griffin and left Mr. Gladwell unharmed. 3.

The church was completed late in 1878, and was dedicated November 24 of the same year. "Marvin Chapel" was the name selected for it, and it is thought to have been named for a Bishop Marvin. The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. J. R. Van Horn, a circuit rider who served this section at that time. His text was taken from Psalm XLIV (44), verses 1, 2, and 3. Rev. A. P. Boude, who may have been a presiding elder, was to have preached the sermon, but a flood prevented his getting here for the occasion. It is said that he came the following spring and preached in the church -- probably the sermon that had been intended for the dedication.

CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH:

The bell tower was added to the church in 1910, and a dedication service for it was held in November of that year. A Rev. Mr. Cackley of Marlinton preached on this occasion.

Originally, there were two doors at the end of the church near each corner, and the aisles were along each side at the windows. It was the custom for the men to sit on the side toward Stephen Hole Run, and the women on the side toward the schoolhouse. The two sides were separated by a low partition in the center, which also served as one end for the seats. These things, of course, were changed when the bell tower was built.

The present chimneys were built at the time the tower was added. Formerly, there was only one chimney. It was built on the inside and stood where the inside doors are now located. The two stoves were placed about as they are now, and the pipes extended along under the ceiling to the chimney.

The first organ, a reed organ, was purchased for the church in 1896, and it is said that it was used the first time for a service on the first Sunday of November of that year. The Estey reed organ, which is still in the church, was gotten a few years later. Although it does not seem to be known just when it was bought, there is a date stamped inside this organ which is November 1908. Before the church was

remodeled in 1910, the organ was placed between the altar rail and the end of the partition between the seats, and the organist faced the pulpit. The choir was near-
by in the front row of seats. Since 1910 the choir has usually, if not always, been located in about the same part of the church which is still used for that purpose. The piano, made by the Price and Teeple Co., was bought for the church by the Ladies Aid Society about 1940.

The platform which is now in the church was put there in 1931. The old platform, or pulpit, did not extend across the entire width of the church, and the choir and organ were on the same floor level with the congregation. The original style was that of a large somewhat rounded platform with the altar rail near the outer edge. Another but smaller platform stood on, and at the back of the larger one, and the Bible stand was on this smaller platform. The minister entered at either back corner.

A new floor was laid in the church in November of 1953.

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY:

The Fiftieth Anniversary of Marvin Chapel was celebrated November 11, 1928. The speaker for the morning service was Mr. John Sydenstricker, of Marlinton, who is a son of Dr. David Sydenstricker, the first Presbyterian minister to serve in the church. Mr. Sydenstricker's topic was "The Salt of the Earth". At noon a picnic lunch was eaten in the grove. In the afternoon there was a song service, followed by a sermon by Rev. S. R. Neel, a former pastor of the church who was then serving the Methodist Church in Marlinton. His text was "What hath God wrought!", taken from Numbers 23 and the 23rd verse. The guest singers for the afternoon were the members of the ladies' quartet from the Presbyterian Church at Marlinton. There were about sixteen (16) people present who had been at the dedication in 1878.

ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH:

1. There has, apparently, always been an active Sunday School at Marvin Chapel, although it did not always meet during the winter months during the earlier years.

5.
There have been about fifteen persons who have served as superintendents of the Sunday School, so far as can be found in available records or remembered. One of the more recent ones who served for many years was Mrs. W. A. Arbogast. She was succeeded by Mr. E. S. Newman, who is the superintendent at the present time.

2. There is some record of a Missionary Society here. These records show that Jas. Grimes was elected president of this society in 1887, and J. S. Smith was elected president in 1889.

3. There was a very active Epworth League in the church about the turn of the century. In 1898 it had fifty-five (55) members, and fifteen (15) Junior League members. This was again organized about the 1930's when there were many young people in the neighborhood, and continued for a few years. In 1948 the young people organized in the Methodist Youth Fellowship, but are not having meetings at the present time.

4. The Ladies Aid Society was organized April 10, 1926, apparently with seventeen members, and has been active ever since that time. This organization has been instrumental in getting, or leading the way to, many needed improvements or additions to the church. Mrs. Fred W. Ruckman was the first president of this organization, and served continuously for about twenty-seven years. She was succeeded by Mrs. Joe Kramer, who is the president at this time.

5. Marvin Chapel was well known a few years ago for its song services, which were held each third Sunday afternoon, for about 12 years, after being organized in 1928. During most of this time, Mr. Fred W. Ruckman was chairman of the organization, and Mr. A. M. Smith was song leader.

6. The Woman's Society of Christian Service was organized here August 6, 1952. Already, this organization's influence can be noted. Mrs. E. S. Newman is president.

FIRST TRUSTEES; MINISTERS; SONS OF THE CHURCH; ETC:

The trustees for the church at the time the deed for the church lot was made in 1877 were: Joseph S. Smith, Wm. H. Overholt, Granville McNeel, Henry N. McClure, Thos. I. Courtney, Isaac B. Smith, George Hill, Michael Scales, and Wm. Clendenen, Sr.

According to the number of names that have been found in the records, there were apparently about fifty members of the church near the time of the dedication in 1878. This included all those who became members between 1850 and about 1879. A record of 1906 shows a membership of eighty-three. In June of 1953 there were one hundred nineteen (119) members of Marvin Chapel.

Some of the ministers who served here before the church was built are as follows: Enoch G. Jamison, 1850; J. S. Gardner, 1858; J. P. Etchison, 1858; A. A. P. Neel, 1864 (the grandfather of Rev. S. R. Neel); P. S. E. Sixeas, 1865; C. A. Joyce, 1869-1873 (spelled "Joice" in some records); a Mr. Baldwin; and J. R. Van Horn came in 1875. The dates given merely indicate that a record was found of their being here at that time, but does not necessarily mean that is the only year they were on this circuit.

Since the church was built there have been at least thirty-three (33) Methodist ministers, and four, or more, assistants, who have served here. During the same period of time there have been eight (8) Presbyterian ministers who preached regularly here.

Pearl S. Buck, the famous author, is a niece of David S. Sydenstricker, D. D., the Presbyterian minister, and his brother Christopher Sydenstricker, the Methodist minister. Both of these men served as pastors at Marvin Chapel.

The Methodist Ministers who served in the church since it was built in 1878 are as follows: (The dates are only approximate in some cases)

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|
| J. R. Van Horn | 1875-1878 | Charles Lynch | 1902-1905 |
| V. W. Wheeler | 1878-1881 | C. F. McClintic, | |
| S. Townsend | 1881-1884 | assistant about here. | |
| | | Mr. Roberts, | |
| A. O. Armstrong | 1884 | assistant | 1904 |
| L. H. Graybill | 1885 | | |
| W. E. Miller | 1886-1889 | J. M. York | 1905-1908 |
| | | L. B. Atkins | 1908-1911 |
| C. Sydenstricker | 1890-1894 | S. R. Neel | 1911-1913 |
| A. C. Hamill | 1894-1896 | C. C. Lambert, | |
| | | assistant | 1911-1914 |
| John H. Dills | 1896-1900 | A. L. Goodall, | |
| W. J. Whitesell | 1900-1902 | assistant | 1912 |

(Methodist Ministers, continued)

7.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| W. F. Lowance | 1913-1915 | G. D. Kirscofe | Jan. 1928-Oct. 1928 |
| W. D. Eye | 1915-1916 | A. C. Fugh | 1928-1931 |
| W. Irving Hanna, Mar. 1916-Sept. 1916 | | E. C. Helmsdoller | 1931-1932 |
| J. W. McNeil | Sept. 1916-Apr. 1917 | John H. Light | 1932-1936 |
| J. W. Rosenberger | 1917-1919 | A. D. Kesler | 1936-1937 |
| K. D. Swecker | 1919-1922 | L. S. Shires | 1937-1942 |
| S. A. F. Wagner | 1922-1923 | R. D. Marshall | 1942-1947 |
| R. O. Hipes | 1923-1927 | A. J. Schrader | 1947-1949 |
| H. A. Wilson | Oct. 1927-Jan. 1928 | T. E. Painter | 1949-1951 |
| | | Frank A. Johnson | 1951- |

Marvin Chapel has been on the same charge with Wesley Chapel, the Methodist Church at Hillsboro, except between 1916 and 1934. During that time the parsonage for Levelton Charge was at Seebert. The first minister to live in the parsonage at Seebert apparently was Rev. W. I. Hanna, and the last one was Rev. John H. Light, who lived there before moving to Hillsboro when the two charges were reunited in 1934.

The ministers of the Oak Grove Presbyterian Church of Hillsboro who preached at Marvin Chapel are as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| David S. Sydenstricker, D. D. | 1878-1905 | |
| Jacob C. Johnson | 1905-1928 | |
| Meade R. Atkinson | 1929-1932 | |
| Marlin B. Curry | 1932-1936 | |
| Joseph E. Knight | 1936-1940 | (Now in Louisville, Ky.) |
| John K. Fleming | 1940-1948 | (Now in Greenville, W. Va.) |
| Drury L. Jones | 1949-1952 | (Now in Philippi, W. Va.) |
| Roger B. Gardien | 1952- | |

Those who went out from Marvin Chapel as ministers were:

1. Charles Ruckman (1821-1872) should probably be considered a son of the early church organization here. He is known to have been preaching in Ohio about the time of the Civil War.
2. T. Wellington Hogsett was a member of this church at the time he received a license as a local preacher about the year of 1900.

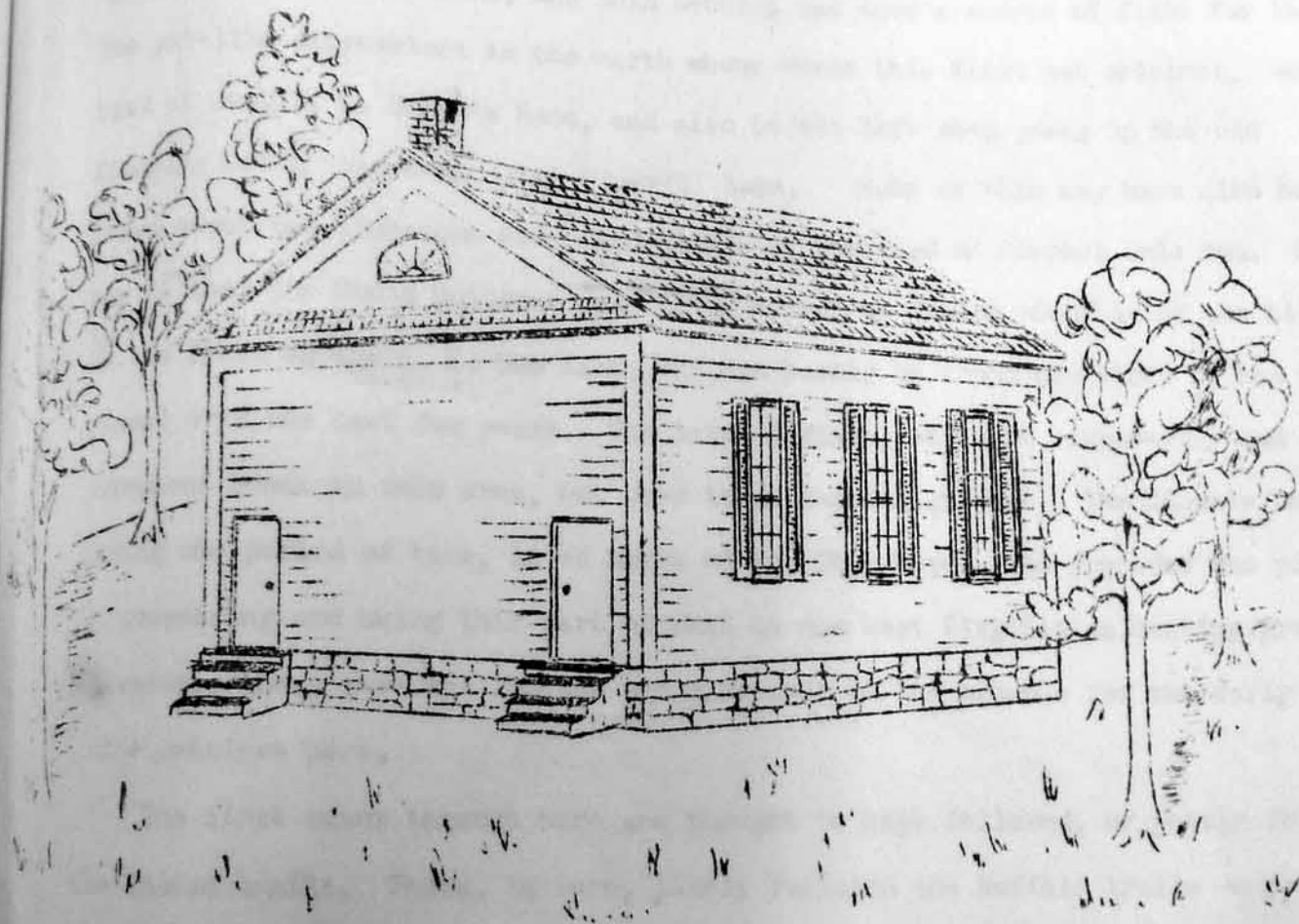
3. Lee V. Ruckman received his local license in 1904, and was admitted into the Baltimore Conference April 5, 1911. He is now serving in the Virginia Conference.
4. Quade R. Arbogast was admitted into the conference in 1937. He is in the West Virginia Conference, and is now stationed on the Richlands Charge near Lewisburg.
- 8.

There have been many revivals held in the church since it was built seventy-five years ago. Among the apparently more outstanding ones are these: in 1913, when Rev. W. F. Lowance was here, most of the men of the neighborhood were converted and in 1919 Rev. Wm. Waters conducted a great revival here. Others, of course, could be mentioned.

It might be of interest to note that the church caught afire in January of 1889. Some damage was done and no services were held for at least one Sunday, at that time. In 1901 the church was closed for five weeks before Christmas on account of smallpox.

It has generally been the custom for the Methodist minister to preach twice each month, and the Presbyterian minister to preach once each month. At the present time the Methodist minister, Rev. Frank A. Johnson, preaches each second Sunday morning and each fourth Sunday afternoon. The Presbyterian minister, Rev. Roger B. Gardien, preaches each first Sunday afternoon. Sunday School is held each Sunday, and prayer meeting is each Thursday evening.

Marvin Chapel is situated in a large oak grove, on U. S. Route 219 near Mill Point, West Virginia. It has been the religious center for the surrounding area for seventy-five years. Through the years the church has been the scene of many joyful and sad occasions. No written record can fathom the individual experiences in the minds and hearts of those who have lived under its influence. On the other hand, many of the experiences and memories are shared by each of us. Therefore, a history of the church is not just something written on paper, but is something that



MARVIN CHAPEL CHURCH
as it looked
when built in 1878 until about 1910

MARVIN CHAPEL AND COMMUNITY
PART II

11.

INDIANS, EARLY SETTLERS, ETC:

There is plenty of evidence that Indians once frequented this area. Many arrowheads have been found, and this section was once a source of flint for these. The pit-like depressions in the earth shows where this flint was obtained, as back of Mrs. T. L. Beard's home, and also to the left when going up the old Stamping Creek road near John Wimer's barn. Some of this may have also been found about the limestone caves and cliffs at the head of Stephen Hole Run. It may be that the Mound Builders once lived here. An Indian mound is on the hill and in the field on the C. E. Gum farm, but can barely be found now since it has been plowed over the last few years. The later Indians, at least, supposedly had no permanent homes in this area, but used it as hunting grounds. The Shawnee Indians, during one period of time, lived north of the Ohio River, and preceded the pioneers in possessing and using this part of what is now West Virginia as hunting grounds. Therefore, these were the Indians who made most of the trouble for the early white settlers here.

The first roads through here are thought to have followed, or partly followed, the Indian trails. These, in turn, likely followed the buffalo trails -- yes, it is said that buffaloes were once in this area. Some people think that an Indian trail, or branch of a trail, came through the Bridger Gap and around the mountain past the old A. E. Boblett home, continuing around the natural "benches" of the Gillilan Mountain, on around the mountains and through the Cranberry region. There seems to be a little controversy as to whether a trail went along the tops of these mountains and through the High Rocks.

Knapp Gregory explored and spent some time about Knapps Creek, and his report to some people in the lower Valley of Virginia caused Jacob Marlin and Stephen

Sewell to explore this region and locate where Marlinton now is situated. These two men could not get along, due to some religious disagreement, so Sewell came to the cave near the source of Stephen Hole Run, as it has since been called. (7:52; 105-106)* Only two men in the entire county and they could not get along — maybe we do pretty well after all! It has already been mentioned that Stephen Sewell was the first white man to live in the Marvin Chapel neighborhood, so far as is known. This was about the winter of 1750-51. Stephens Cave apparently goes for quite a distance under the earth, and must have once been the subterranean source of Stephen Hole Run. Some parts of it are quite small, while some sections are large and room-like. Stephen Sewell went on into what is now Greenbrier County and was supposedly killed by Indians there. (Since Marlinton was named for Jacob Marlin, it seems rather strange that the name is so often incorrectly pronounced with a "g" included).

The first permanent white settler in what is now Pocahontas County was John McNeel, who lived about where Dick McNeel now lives. He came there alone about 1765 (7:136), but would hardly be called a permanent settler until he married and brought his wife there sometime near 1770. The McNeel Cemetery was started, according to tradition, when John McNeel's wife buried her first child there. Her husband was away with General Lewis in 1774, when the Battle of Point Pleasant was fought, so she alone had to dig the grave and bury the child.

No one seems to know who was the first permanent settler in the immediate Marvin Chapel neighborhood. John Swinler and John Poage had land surveys about Stephen Hole Run in 1774 (3:23), so it may be they were the first settlers here.

* (7:52; 105-106) This indicates the source of information as it is listed at the end of this history. Number 7, the first number in the parentheses refers to Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County, W. Va. by William T. Price. The information from this book immediately precedes the notation, and is on the pages given. (Much of this history is a summary of many source materials, and no attempt is being made to show them in many cases).

The people here now do not seem to have heard much, if anything, about these two men. Pocahontas County was not formed until 1821, and when these surveys were made this state was, until 1863, a part of Virginia. Thomas Cochran must have been among the first settlers in the Marvin Chapel neighborhood. He owned a great deal of land, and built the big log house which later became the Ruckman home when David L. Ruckman bought part of this land and moved here with his family in 1832. The remains of this old house can still be seen near C. E. Gum's home. The Gillilan* family lived, at an early date, on what is known as the Gillilan Mountain, and likely in the old house that once stood near the end of the "top meadow" on the Fred Ruckman farm. This house stood where some rocks may be seen near a small spring. A Kinnison family once lived where Boyd Dilley now lives, and a Burgess family lived in a house that once stood on the Hogsett farm.

Fort Day was located at Mill Point. (It has also been called Fort Beckley and Fort Price (3:26)). The exact spot is not known, but was quite near where J. Lanty McNeel's home now stands. The "Bridger Boys" were going to this fort when killed, and supposedly scalped, by Indians in the vicinity of Bridger Gap on the Auldrige Mountain. Some Indians were hidden about where the gate is now located that enters the old field nearby. Two shots rang out and John fell, but Jim was not touched, and ran on through the gap. He was shot in the back by a pursuing Indian near the bottom of the mountain where there was a straight section in the path. They had left a party of people who were also going to the fort, in order to take the short cut across the mountain. Nathan, a colored man, was with them, but escaped unhurt as he had stopped to fasten his moccasins. The others were at the Waddell place when they heard the shooting. Shortly after the shooting they heard the whoops of the Indians in the vicinity of the gap. These were answered about the Gillilan Mountain, and later were heard about the head of Stamping Creek. This could indicate that a trail went through about the head of Stamping Creek. Nothing more was seen or heard of them as they probably saw that the settlers were banding to-

*Gillilan - usually pronounced Gil'-li-an

Arrangements were soon made to bring in the bodies of the two who had been killed. John Cochran had brought an old, gentle horse and a "half sled" to the fort. The sled was taken to where Jim Bridger lay, and remained there until John was carried down from the gap. The mark of the Indian's heel could be seen where he had halted to deliver the fatal shot that killed Jim. They were taken to the fort, and buried in one grave "...on the knoll overlooking Millpoint." (7:558-560) No one knows just where this grave is located, although some of the older people thought it may be in the field back of McNeel's house and barn - or possibly near where some other graves are located on an opposite hill.

This Indian raid, which took place somewhere near 1784, was apparently not a large one, and not more than twenty-three Indians were actually seen at that time. The Bridger home was on Dry Creek in the Buckeye neighborhood about John McNeill's.

The people on the way to the fort stopped and urged Mr. Waddell, who lived about where J. S. Cook now lives, to hurry and go with them. He refused to go until he had hidden his hogs in a pen in the woods. He said that he would about as soon be dead as to not have any "hawg" meat. Another incident of this same Indian raid was that a Bill Ewing, who lived about the McClintic farm, left the fort to go back home to see about a prized "bull-tongue" plow that he was afraid something would harm. He was looking at the plow when he heard the click of a rifle. He discovered two or three Indians in the nearby woods, and had been saved by the rifle's failing to fire. He pretended not to see the Indians and gradually got out of their sight before starting to run. He eluded their pursuit by leaving the trail as it crossed Rush Run. He waded up the stream some distance and hid behind a tree, later returning to the fort by keeping away from the usual trails. (These two incidents were related by Dr. G. D. McNeill*, who also supplied other information concerning the early history of the community).

Along about this time Hugh McKeever was killed by Indians on Stamping Creek. It is said that he was scalped and left in a sitting position against a big log in what is known as the "Huey field" on the Sharp farm. This log was not far from the cemetery, and was on the rise back of and to the right of the barn. (This in-

*Dr. G. D. McNeill is one of the two residents of Pocahontas County who was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LL.D.). He received this from Davis and Elkins College in 1951. The other is Dr. Calvin W. Price, who received his degree from West Virginia University in 1942.

cident was mentioned by G. D. McNeill, and the details of it were told by E. H. 15.
(Newt) Landis). (Also see page 27)**

BISHOP FRANCIS ASBURY:

Bishop Francis Asbury, first bishop of the Methodist Church in America, made one of his trips through this area in 1788. He followed the trail through Monroe and Greenbrier Counties and rode up the trail through the Locust Creek area. It is said that he stopped and preached at the Jordan home, which is now owned by J. L. McNeel. He then came on to John McNeel's home, arriving there Tuesday, July 8, 1788. In his journal of daily events he wrote, "Reached M'Neal's, on the Little Levels, where almost the whole settlement came together, with whom I found freedom on Matt. XI, 28-30. Our brother Phoebus had to answer questions propounded to him until evening." (4:33) It might be supposed that he preached in the White Pole Church which John McNeel built, at an apparently unknown date, about the vicinity of the McNeel Cemetery. The next day Bishop Asbury continued his journey toward Clarksburg, spending that night at Clover Lick. He must have passed through on the old road near the site of Marvin Chapel.

THE STORY OF THE BEAR:

The story of the bear carrying off a small child is supposedly based on truth, although it is seldom heard the same way twice. Some say it all happened about Little Mountain; or that the body of the child, with its head crushed, was recovered by clubbing the bear as it crossed the fence; and sometimes the name of the family is given as "Little" or some other name. Of all these various versions, one of the more commonly heard ones will be given here. A family by the name of Naylor was living about the top of the Gillilan Mountain, and their house stood on the Stamping Creek side of the field where the Early Ruckman barn now stands. The mother being sick, the father took the child out in the field where he was plowing, and left it on a stump or about the furrow. He later was horrified to see a bear carrying away the child. The alarm was screamed over the mountain side to the

16.

Cochran home. Some men gave chase to the bear, following it across Stamping Creek to Little Mountain where only the feet of the child were found. (Some of this old tradition has been given by Mrs. A. E. Boblett. She has also supplied considerable other information concerning the church and community).

THE RUCKMAN CEMETERY:

The Ruckman Cemetery is said to have been started when John H. Ruckman buried the first of his children who died when he lived in this vicinity. He then owned the land in that area, and it is said that the grave could then be seen from his home on the opposite hill in what is now J. L. McNeel's field. As he came here about 1845 (7:162), it may be that the graveyard was started soon after that date, but certainly before the Civil War as he moved away about the time of the war. John H. Ruckman is not an ancestor of any of the Ruckmans now living in this area, although he was related somewhat to the ones who remained here. It appears that the McNeel Cemetery was the burial place of most families here before the Ruckman Cemetery was started.

JAMES E. A. GIBBS:

James E. A. Gibbs invented, or was the co-inventor of, the chain-stitch sewing machine while living about the mouth of Stamping Creek. It seems that at that particular time he owned no land there and was boarding at a home while working on his invention. He apparently was successful with this machine and accumulated some money from it. It is said that he sold each sewing machine for sixty-five dollars. It may be that this machine was invented sometime before the Civil War. (see p. 28)

MEN WHO FOUGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR; GEN. LEE; FIGHTING IN THIS AREA:

This list of those who fought in the Civil War was made some years ago by Miss Maggie Ruckman and J. R. Ruckman. It apparently was written, for the most part, with only the more immediate neighborhood in mind. The rank held is not shown for most of these men, so this can not be given for the most part. Most, if not all,

17.
of these men were in the Confederate Army. The ones who were in the war were: Col. James W. Ruckman; Capt. David Bird Ruckman - killed in battle; Michael Scales; William Saddler; Allen Kinnison; William Kinnison; Hezekiah Kinnison; Franklin Cochran; James Derman; James W. Ruckman, adjutant - died while a prisoner of war; William H. Aldridge; John Aldridge; Isaac B. Smith; and four sons of John H. Ruckman whose names were Spiney; Charles; James A.; and Samuel Ruckman. (This list was made available at this time by Mrs. C. E. Gum, who has also given considerable other information for this history).

General Robert E. Lee came through this area, and camped overnight near Mill Point, about September of 1861. Mrs. William T. Beard, who lived not far distant, sent a fine breakfast to him. He declined to eat it since he could not be sure who might be his enemies in this section. There was once a marker on an oak tree that showed the camp site. This was on what is now the John Wimer farm, at the right side of the old road that went up Stamping Creek, and on the rise just beyond the spring that is at the left side of this old road.

There was some fighting across the valley about Mill Point on the morning of November 5, 1863, the day before the Battle of Droop Mountain. The Confederates were retreating toward Droop Mountain, and the "Yankees" were advancing in that direction after coming down the Beaver Creek road and also the regular road. It is said that the Confederates had also managed to delay them somewhat at Stephen Hole Inn. The people here at that time were, of course, subjected to some looting by the soldiers. This would be by, or mostly by, the Union soldiers as most of the people here were on the opposite side.

General Echols was in command of the Confederate forces, and General Averill was in command of the Union forces during the battle of Droop Mountain. It might be that since the Confederates had the advantage of being on top of Droop Mountain, and many of their men were familiar with this section, that they could have made a better stand that day. It is said that one of the captains did try to warn the superior officers. Anyway, General Averill pretended to attack from another

18.
then sent his forces up Droop Mountain after detecting the confusion of the Confederates caused by being attacked in an unexpected quarter. About all that the Confederate soldiers of this area, who were in the battle, could later brag about was how well they ran that day. One man is reported to have later wondered how, after fleeing down the mountain, he had crossed the Greenbrier River without getting his feet wet! This battle was fought November 6, 1863. It is said to have been the largest battle fought in West Virginia, so far as the number of men involved is concerned.

MILL POINT - MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE:

The elevation of Mill Point is given as 2217 feet above sea level (6:472). It would seem that Mill Point has long been a place where people could get needed supplies, and it is quite likely that the early settlers could get some of these at the old fort there. No one seems to know why this fort has been known by three names (see P. 13), but likely due to some reason such as the name of the man in charge at a certain time, or as to who had it built or made improvements on it. The Fort Beckley name, which is sometimes given, should most likely be Fort Keckly, according to Dr. G. D. McNeill. The name Keckly was the original German name for the Cackley family, and came to be spelled as it is now by the way it was pronounced. The Cackley family settled at Mill Point about 1773 (7:197). Members of this family have owned a great deal of land in the Mill Point area. They built the first grain mills at Mill Point, and these two mills were located about where the present ones stand. They also had a tannery, a store, and possibly the post office. Since Valentine Cackley, the pioneer, probably lived within the limits of the fort (7:200), it seems reasonable that it may have once been called Fort Keckly, although it is now commonly referred to as Fort Day. At any rate, Mill Point was once called Cackley.

Many people can remember Nicholas J. Brown, who came from Washington, D. C., and he was in the store at Mill Point. The building, which was on the McNeel land

18.

19.
was destroyed by a flood in 1935. It had not been used for a store for many years. The building standing across the road from the mill was used for a store after the other building was abandoned for this purpose. The present building was erected by William H. Auldridge. He had the store and post office there for many years, and these were later carried on by R. H. Auldridge, a son. This store and post office are now under the management of Winters Hefner.

Joseph Cackley owned the first upper mill, and sold to Sampson Mathews (7:199). The land there was later bought by Isaac McNeel, who built the present upper mill somewhere near 1868. The first lower mill was erected by Valentine Cackley (7:199). It would seem from the reading of this account that this was Valentine Cackley, Jr., a son of the pioneer already named. The more recent lower mill, which has not been used for many years, was apparently built somewhat later than the present upper mill. There was also a wool carding machine at the lower mill, and once years ago there was a still in that area. There were, in somewhat more recent times, as many as two blacksmith shops in operation at the same time at Mill Point.

J. L. McNeel remembers of having heard, although he had not checked it further, that Mill Point is the second oldest post office in the county and that Edray is the oldest. (Mr. McNeel has given considerable information for this history).

The famed Cranberry Glades are only a few miles from Mill Point, as well as the High Rocks - those high cliffs on the mountain top, from which the persistent hiker can be rewarded for his climb, on a clear day, by the grandeur of the view before him. Also, two well-known landmarks on the mountains surrounding the immediate Marvin Chapel neighborhood are the Pinnacle Rocks and the Cap Rocks.

Mill Point, and the surrounding area, has certainly had its part in the formation and history of not only West Virginia, but America itself. It was here that the early settlers came for protection from the Indians. Later, people came many miles to get their grain ground - the mills often running day and night. There was considerable activity at Mill Point during the great lumbering days, and it is here that the people have long come to get their mail and to buy their supplies.

The old road that came down through the "Flats" can still be seen in places, as below the present road on the J. S. Cook farm, along the edge of the Dolan farm, and through the woodland and continuing beyond Stephen Hole Run on the Burrell Arbogast farm. On the latter farm it turns more to the right and does not go quite to the Ruckman Cemetery. It continues over the bank and follows a creek a short distance before crossing Stephen Hole Run, and then can be seen a short distance as it goes sharply to the right and up the steep bank there. At a certain place along this old road on the Dolan farm, there is a sand bank that was a source of sand for concrete mixing. This old road has apparently determined the back boundary of the small farms, which are now on the right of the present road, between the church and the top of the hill toward Buckeye. These were apparently sold off after being severed from the original farms by the newer road.

The road was probably put in its present location about 1854, when the Lewisburg and Marlinton Turnpike was built (7:74). This also appears to be indicated when J. R. Ruckman wrote, "...since the pike was built in the fifties." (8)

Some changes were made in the road when it was graded by the Echols Construction Company a short time before it was hard surfaced, as on each side of the hill between Stephen Hole Run and Mill Point. The road between Marlinton and Mill Point was hard surfaced about 1924-25. The section between Mill Point and Buckeye was contracted by the R. G. Hill Construction Company, who got the limestone rock from the quarry at about the head of Stephen Hole Run. They had their camp on top of the nearby hill on the F. W. Ruckman farm.

It is said that the first hard surfaced road in Pocahontas County was that between Hillsboro and Mill Point - and also that probably no other road needed a hard surface worse than this one! During the period of about 1906-08 a sixteen-foot "traffic bound" rock surface was put there. It was rebuilt about 1913 with a water bound macadamized surface. (The information about the building of this road between Hillsboro and Mill Point has been written here as remembered by Richard McCarty).

The road between Richwood and Mill Point (W. Va. Highway 39) was first graded and then hard surfaced during the period of about 1935-43. This road was partly made along the old log train grade, and at Big Fill it went directly over the

original fill there. The Federal Prison Camp came to the Cranberry area during that period, and prison labor was used in part of the road construction. 21.

The Greenbrier Division of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway was commenced in June, 1899, and the first operation of trains over this branch in Pocahontas County was in December, 1900 (6:2). This was completed to Durbin somewhat later.

Before the railroad was built the mail was carried horseback between Lewisburg and Huntersville. Huntersville was the first county seat of Pocahontas County. (7:586). (In 1891 it was voted to change the county seat to Marlinton, which at that time had a population of about one hundred people. (7:619). By starting early in the morning, the mail could be taken from Huntersville to Lewisburg in one day and the return trip made the next. Thomas Hogsett, who lived in this neighborhood, once had the contract for carrying this mail, but apparently did not carry it himself unless it was when he was younger. It is said that Clint Kellison, also of this neighborhood, was once a carrier on this route. The merchants of this area would send wagons to Ronceverte to get their supplies. John A. Sydenstricker remembers that a stagecoach came through on the same route about 1883-86. It had a regular schedule, and Hillsboro was a station for getting fresh horses. A man by the name of Flack was the driver, and he blew a horn before arriving so the horses would be ready.

During the period of about twenty-five years before the railroad came, in about 1900, a great amount of timber was floated to Ronceverte on the Greenbrier River. The walnut and cherry were taken out by rafting (7:621), whenever there was a "rafting flood". Also during this period there were the great "log drives" on the river during the spring floods. It is said that there were probably two to three million board feet of lumber in each of these drives. Most of these logs that were floated in the river were white pine, although there was an occasional drive of spruce or hemlock. The last log drive, which was white pine from the Knapps Creek area, went through Marlinton March 17, 1907. (This date was given by Dr. Calvin W. Price, who has also given other information and suggestions for this history).

This area has had, at various times, many sawmills busy at the job of sawing

the abundant supply of timber. During the period of about 1905 to 1914 there were two large lumber companies located on Stamping Creek, and these contributed a great deal to the material growth of the community*. The coming of the railroad had made this, as well as many other things, possible. Work was plentiful, and the average laborer got about \$1.50 for a ten or eleven hour day's work - which was considered good wages then. The Warn Lumber Company came near 1905, and built Warntown and its big sawmill along Stamping Creek some distance below Mill Point. This company got its timber mostly from the Cranberry area, bringing the logs to Warntown on their log trains. The sawed lumber was then taken out on their railroad to where it joined the Chesapeake and Ohio near Seebert. John Raine and Company came shortly after the other company came, and got timber mostly in the Stamping Creek area. This company built Rainetown quite some distance above Mill Point on Stamping Creek, and sawed their lumber there. They took their lumber out over Warn's railroad. It is said that the Warn Lumber Co. completed their job slightly sooner and sold their railroad to John Raine and Co.

A sawmill that is now in operation on Stamping Creek, along W.Va. Highway 39, is that of the W. W. Harper Lumber Company, which located there in October of 1939. Since that time it has been destroyed by fire and rebuilt.

THE FIRST NEWSPAPER, TELEPHONES, ETC:

"The first newspaper to be published in this county was the Pocahontas Times, founded in 1882 at Huntersville, and moved to Marlinton in 1892" (7:620).

*

* The word "community" is used throughout this history with the intention of including a larger territory than when the word "neighborhood" is used. Also it must be remembered that it would be difficult to establish definite boundary lines for these. The natural geographical boundary of the neighborhood can not always be used as this may not include people who are considered in the neighborhood because they have attended church or school here. This has also changed through the years since other schools and churches have been built. For example, some who were once thought of as belonging in this neighborhood might now be in the Seebert neighborhood, as Seebert grew up after the coming of the railroad. Also, many people from Stamping Creek came to Marvin Chapel before a church was built there.

23.

"The first telephone to be built in the county was the Marlinton and Beverly telephone line finished to Marlinton in August, 1899. That same year telephone lines were built along all the principal roads of the county." (7:620)

The Bank of Marlinton went into business in 1899, and was the first bank in the county. Special messengers carried in large sums of money over lonely roads from the nearest express stations, for more than a year. (7:620).

The first automobile in the neighborhood was a Ford gotten about 1913 by Dr. M. C. Smith, who then owned and lived at what is now the E. S. Newman farm. Soon afterwards another Ford was gotten by Fred W. Ruckman.

Radios were beginning to be owned by a few people in the neighborhood about 1924. These had a set or two of earphones which had to be passed around rather often so all the family - and neighbors - could hear some of the things that came in on the then strange invention. The earphones were soon replaced by a big horn which sat on or near the radio. Television began to be in the area somewhere near 1952, and this too, they do say, has a certain drawing power on the neighbors.

LOCAL INDUSTRIES:

At various times there have been some small tanneries, or tanyards, in the neighborhood. There was one of these operated by a Dorman family on what is now the Fred Ruckman farm. This was about the spring at the corners of the C. E. Gum and W. A. Arbogast farms. Another of these was near the mouth of Stephen Hole Run and was owned by Isaac B. Smith, who also had a gristmill there. There was a tanyard owned by Edgar Smith, at his home on a hill overlooking the Greenbrier River. This was rebuilt about 1920, and used for some years. Another of these was owned by Joseph S. Smith. A tannery that was started in more recent years is the one built by Benton Smith in 1935-36.

At one time, probably near 1890, William (Willie) Hogsett had a small bed springs factory in a building near Stephen Hole Run, about where Burrell Arbogast now lives. Some of these bed springs are still in use in the neighborhood. This neighborhood is primarily a farming and stock raising area. However, many

23.

who live here have other jobs - some of whom farm on a part time basis.

There are two service stations in the neighborhood. Lloyd D. Wilson built his garage and Esso Service Station in 1930-31, and Benton Smith built his Gulf Service Station in 1935-36.

NOTES ON A FEW INDIVIDUALS:

Rev. James E. Moore (1811-1890) became a member of Marvin Chapel, by Certificate, May 21, 1886. He came here from Edray, and lived his remaining years on the farm now owned by Wilbur E. Moore, a grandson. He probably had no regular charge after moving here. He was a local preacher of the highest type. He was converted at a camp meeting near Hillsboro in 1831, licensed to preach by the quarterly conference of the Huntersville Circuit in 1837, ordained local deacon in Baltimore by Bishop Waugh, and ordained local elder in 1869 by Bishop Wightman. Rev. Wm. E. Miller, in writing his obituary in 1890, wrote, "He married and buried more people, baptized more children, and was instrumental in the conversion of more souls, than any other preacher that ever lived in his county."

In the past this community has been fortunate in having medical doctors available. One of these was Dr. Matthew Wallace (1822-1897), who lived at Mill Point. Another was Dr. H. W. McNeel (1872-1948), who was born and reared at Mill Point, and lived at Hillsboro many years while practicing medicine. Both of these men were outstanding country doctors. Both rode horseback many, many miles, often through bitter cold weather - day or night, to be at the bedside of the sick.

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck was born at Hillsboro, June 26, 1892, at her mother's old home - the Stulting home. This is now the home of George P. Edgar. Her missionary parents, Rev. and Mrs. Absalom Sydenstricker, were then on leave and took her back to China with them when she was four months old. She was educated in the United States, but China continued to be her home until 1933. She taught there in several universities. She acquired a knowledge of China which she incorporated in books that were to make her famous. In 1938 she was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

On a Saturday night, October 1, 1938, the community relived its past history in the pageant "Time Turns Back". This was presented in the amphitheater-like field on the Fred Ruckman farm, and was complete with "Indians", horses, covered wagon, log cabin, and the portraying of various historical or famous persons. Where possible the descendants or relatives took the part of these persons. J. L. McNeel acted the part of John McNeel, the pioneer. John A. Sydenstracker, a cousin to Pearl Buck, acted the part of Hermanus Stulting, her grandfather. G. D. McNeill was the announcer. Slaves at play around the camp fire were portrayed by the colored folks of Watoga. The veterans of World War I had a part in the finale. The band from Union, W. Va. furnished the music. Barbecued beef was an added attraction, and was expertly carved by J. L. Murrell, the jovial Negro postmaster of the village of Watoga.

SCHOOLS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND MAIL ROUTE:

The history of the earliest schools in the neighborhood is rather vague. So short terms of school may have been held in any available building or home. It is said there was once a schoolhouse on the hill in the vicinity of J. L. McNeel's barn. This was back to the left of this barn and in the little valley where a small stream of water comes down from the mountain.

The log schoolhouse about the Ruckman Cemetery was used for some years until it was burned during the Civil War. It is known that sometime after this building was burned that school was held in a building rented from William T. Beard.⁽⁸⁾ This was on top of the hill beyond Mill Point, and across the road from Mrs. T. L. Beard's home.

The present school lot was given by Col. John W. Ruckman and wife in June, 1869. (Deed Book No. 9, page 123). Philip Hetsell contracted the job of putting up the building, and Cornelius Stulting was the first teacher.⁽⁸⁾ This was the first free schoolhouse built in the Little Levels District, and was always known as Number 1 - Ruckman.⁽⁸⁾ This building was replaced in 1913. The second building burned before Christmas of 1914, but was not considered a great loss by some of the local citizens as it had been built from, or partly from, old materials. The present building

26.
was built during the latter part of 1915. The school term probably opened late that fall with an enrollment of 44 pupils. Dakota Kirk (Mrs. C. W. Hill) was the first teacher in the new building. The last term of school in this building was taught by Annas Cole in 1942-43. The school opened for the next term, but it was decided to take the students to Hillsboro, and this has been done every year since that time. The school building and grounds have since been used as a community center.

The Farm Women's Club of this neighborhood was organized December 4, 1945. Presidents of this organization, in the order of their service, have been as follows: Mrs. E. S. Newman, Mrs. W. O. Ruckman, Virginia Hayes, Mrs. Merritt Turner, and Mrs. Boyd Dilley. This organization has made various improvements at the Community Center, and at this time is planning for outdoor fireplaces and picnic tables.

The 4-H Club in this neighborhood was organized in 1947. The first president was Ray Kramer, and he was succeeded by John Dilley, the president at this time. Those who have served as adult leaders are Mrs. Merritt Turner and Mrs. Joe Kramer.

The mail route, R.F.D. No. 1 from Buckeye, began in May, 1946, and has continued since that time. The first mail carrier on this route was Jim McNeill, and he was followed by C. P. Pritchard, the carrier at this time. Mill Point had always been the post office for this neighborhood before this route was established.

SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WENT FROM THE MARVIN CHAPEL NEIGHBORHOOD:

Those serving in WORLD WAR I were: Elbert Messer (Gold Star), Ben F. Kellison, Fred R. McClure, Sherman H. Moore, W. O. Ruckman, and Fred J. Waugh.

Those in service during WORLD WAR II were; John J. Dunn (Gold Star), Argile C. Arbogast, Richard Auldrige, Jack Bostic, Price Boblett, Harper Dever, Warren Dever, Wallace Gum, Alfred Gum, John Hayes, Charles Kramer, Joseph Kramer, Herbert McClure, Lloyd McClure, Morgan McClure, Norman McClure, Minnie Pritt - WAC., Oliver Pritt, Amon Ray, Jack Ray, Arthur Ramsey, Ben Ramsey, Johnny Ramsey, F. Wilmer Ruckman, Forrest Scott, Denzil Totten, Elvern Totten, Dale Turner, Raymond Turner, Dwight Waugh, Beecher Wilfong, Earl Wilfong, Fred Wilfong, and Lee Wilfong.

Those in service since World War II are: Richard P. Arbogast, Clarence Bostic,

Floyd Copen, John Copen, Robert Dolan, Letcher Landis, Roy Lee Landis, Forrest McClure, Jr., Clyde Rudd, Robert Waugh, Clyde Wilfong, and Ted Wilfong. 27.

THE WEATHER:

The "deep snow" is said to have fallen December 16, 1890.(8) A few years ago there ~~was~~ quite an argument about what year this occurred, and this was carried on through letters in the Pocahontas Times. It apparently was not noticed that the date of December, 1890 was recorded in the history of the county.(7:618) The snow seems to have been around three feet deep. It is said that it stayed on the ground for a great while that winter, and after it settled and crusted over the people could travel on top of it.

The summer of 1838 was so dry that swamp deposits could burn; and there was a killing frost June 5, 1859.(7:46) About 1924 there was a late killing frost, and some people planted their corn again while others let it grow up again from the top of the ground - getting fair results. It is said that 1880 was a dry year. It is known, of course, that two very dry summers were those of 1930 and 1953. Some of the winters with subzero weather were: 1917-18; 1926-27; January 1936; and January 1940. Several inches of snow fell in late April of 1928.

In the late afternoon of the first Sunday of July in 1935 there was a severe flash flood in this area, and seemed to be mainly near the mountains between the Stamping Creek and Buckeye sections. The next day the men began to repair fences and other damage caused by the water. As they worked one neighbor said to another, "A flood like that never happens but once in a lifetime!" But, of all things, before the day was over another flood came, destroying all results of the day's work. This second flood was similar to, and at about the same time as the one on the previous day. These occurred July 7 and 8, 1935.

ADDITIONAL NOTES, AND A SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY HISTORY:

It may be of interest to some to mention that a brief account of the killing of Hugh McKeever (see page 14) is given in a history (10:292). This book gives the

name as "McIver". One story is that the Indians captured McKeever's wife, while another is that she, not being warned of the danger of an Indian raid, had gone to the fort that day for supplies and was there when the Indians killed her husband. 28.

James E. A. Gibbs (see p. 16) bought about one hundred and twenty acres of land (Deed Book No. 8, p. 93), on the Greenbrier River below the mouth of Stamping Creek in May, 1860. In December, 1863 he and his wife, Katharine, sold this land back to the man from whom it had been bought - John H. Ruckman. (Deed Book No. 11, p. 181)

This section of Pocahontas County was once a part of Bath County, and that can be verified, in one way, by some old deeds. Some people think that this area may have once been a part of Greenbrier County, but nothing definite has been found at this time to verify this.

This area was once called Union Township, according to the deed for the Ruckman School lot, which was made in 1869. (Deed Book No. 9, p. 123).

A few notes are written here that are taken from the booklet West Virginia, the Wonderland That's Real. (1:12, 18, 26-27) These notes, used by permission, are: Greenbrier County was formed soon after the Revolution and extended to the Ohio River and nearly to Parkersburg; "Jim Bridger, noted scout and Indian fighter in the northwest and from whom Fort Bridger in Colorado took its name, was born in Pocahontas County."; the Cranberry Glades have created much interest due to the plants which grow there that are found usually in only northern areas near the Arctic Circle. They have been referred to as the "naturalist's paradise".

It is most likely that many of the earlier people of this neighborhood attended school at Hillsboro, and educational opportunities were increased when the Little Levels Academy was established there. "This institution was established in 1842 under a charter granted by the State of Virginia." (2:55)

It is said that the Greenbrier River is the longest river wholly within the state.

The days of the road building through the neighborhood near the early 1920s

had many attractions for the children. However, even the giant steam shovel and other equipment could hardly dim the wonder of the huge southern Negro at Hill's camp who could carry a big bucket of water on his head! 29.

It is amazing when we stop a moment and think of the many, many changes that have taken place in such a comparatively short space of time. Perhaps it is good to occasionally look back into the earlier days of our community, for we may gain a little more appreciation and understanding of things as we now know them - maybe even of ourselves and of our neighbor. Is it any wonder that we sometimes seem confused and hardly know which way to go or act? After all, we have no time-tested precedent to follow since all these many changes have taken place so rapidly in our modern world.

The Indian no longer jealously guards his hunting ground. Stephen Sewell might recognize the swamp in front of his cave if he could once more gaze out upon it on an early morning, but as the fog would lift he could no longer see the great trees that once grew over the countryside. He would surely wonder what had taken place could he see and hear the early morning traffic of cars, trucks, trailers, buses, and the tractors with their various types of farm equipment attached.

Gone are the days when each family made their cloth for clothes; made five to six hundred pounds of maple sugar each spring for their year's sugar supply; and seldom do we now see apple butter being made out in the big copper kettle; or strings of dried apples and other dried foods hanging over the kitchen stove. The gristmills are now silent. (Oh well, not everything is silent - the good ladies can still do a good job of talking! The men can too, but we won't admit that, so look out for the rolling pin - or is that a museum piece also?)

The ox teams have long been gone, and now it would seem that the horses are about to follow them. No more do we see the buggy or the surrey in use - and even the day is gone when the good folks wondered if it was alright to use the family car on Sunday. Anyway, it was soon decided that it would be alright to go to church in it, and well -- since it was out it would be a good time to visit a friend or two!

It is, of course, alright to use the car any time now - we hope!

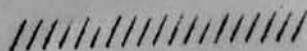
30.

Gone are the mud holes from the old turnpike; the candles and kerosene lamps - except when the power is off; the fleas and bedbugs (never heard of them) - if PDD is used; and gone is the fear of some of the old diseases such as smallpox and others. Even the rats, those age-long pests of mankind, are receiving a staggering blow from the use of Warfarin. So maybe the world is getting better, with all our problems gone - that is except some things such as: getting old; the hydrogen bomb; not having a job that can adequately support our automobile; the shortage, in some places, of school teachers (bless them); awaiting your turn to see a doctor - better learn to knit or take a good book along; the high price of coffee; and the worry about who will win the ball game and by how many points.

If we continue to add them to the list it may look like a lot of things from the past are gone. It is going to be up to us to decide whether there are some things that we want to keep, such as -- well-l-l, maybe some of the old customs such as sitting up all night with a sick neighbor, or helping dig a grave.

Many of the things we say are gone are not gone - not really, but have become a part of the new. The early pioneers who blazed the trails had an important part in bringing about our present way of life. And can't you hear the sounds from the old blacksmith shops? They were not just forging a bolt or a plowshare, but a beginning for a whole new way of life. So when we talk about things being "gone" we may not be using the term as we would for some extinct ancient city. From the pioneer we have inherited a love of the mountains, a love of freedom, and, we trust, a sense of direction that will guide us in blazing the new "trails" that lie before us today.

There will be times when we will, at least in our own minds, evaluate our community, and sometimes it may not be placed very high. But there will be other times, when using a long range view, that we may come up with an answer just a little like that of a former local farmer-citizen who was putting some of his own variety of very fine but nameless potatoes on the market. Suddenly facing the need of a name for them, he said with inspiration, "Call them Best Ever".



It may be that John Smith was the first, or one of the first, of the circuit riders who came through this area. He was appointed to the Greenbrier Circuit in 1787, which was the first year there was a Greenbrier Circuit. The work that was done in the Greenbrier area previous to this was apparently done by circuit riders in the Bedford Circuit, and by local preachers among the settlers. "When his year ended in 1788, the Greenbrier Circuit extended over portions of Pocahontas, Greenbrier, and Monroe counties in West Virginia--as well as portions of Giles, Craig, Botettourt, and Alleghany counties in present-day Virginia." There were no conferences held west of the mountains until the spring of 1788, when John Smith was elected to deacon. He was the first Methodist minister ordained west of the mountains, and was ordained by Bishop Asbury on July 6, 1788. (9:5;16)

Since Part I has been written (see p. 6) some additional names or dates have been found concerning the ministers, or circuit riders who served here before the church was built. These are: J. M. Clarke, 1847-49; John W. Start, 1849-50; E. J. Jamison, 1850-52; T. F. McClure, 1852, P. S. E. Sixeas, 1865-1868; S. P. Hyde, 1868, a brief time - year was completed by J. H. Meredith, and James E. Moore.

Some of the presiding elders of the Lewisburg District, according to a clipping from an old Pocahontas Times, are as follows: J. H. Waugh; J. K. Gilberts; 1873-74; W. D. Coe, D. D., 1874-77; Adam P. Boude, 1877-79; John C. Dice, 1879-83; David Bush, D. D., 1883-87; Hamilton W. Kinger, 1887-90; S. G. Ferguson, 1890-92; W. G. Hammond, 1892-96; J. D. Martin, 1896-99; J. S. Hutchinson, 1899-03; and Geo. T. Tyler, 1903. (This list was made available at this time by Mrs. Eudora Pritchard).

EARLY MEMBERS OF MARVIN CHAPEL:

The original church membership records do not seem to be in existence now, but copies of these are available, although this could be a source of error in some cases. The first record apparently begins in 1850, although many dates are not shown, and this list is an attempt to include all members up to about 1879 - that is those who were members before, or near the time the church was dedicated November 24, 1878.

The early members of Marvin Chapel, according to available records, were:

(EARLY MEMBERS OF MARVIN CHAPEL - CONTINUED)

32.

Joseph S. Smith, 1850; William H. Auldridge; Effie L. Auldridge; Michael Scales, 1858; Abigail Smith, 1865 - by certificate; Martha E. Auldridge; Cora Lee Hoover; John S. Moore, 1877 - by certificate; G. L. Auldridge, 1877; E. L. Smith, 1877; Irene Scales, 1878; Josiah Cline, 1878; Mary E. Cline, 1878; Joseph Pennell, 1878; Eliza Ruckman, 1878 - by certificate; M. F. Ruckman, 1878; Nancy Hanna Abrick, 1878; Henry McClure; Martha McClure, 1879; J. M. Auldridge; Mary Adkison; Cornelia Adkison; Labina Atkison; Virginia Burgess; Martha Clendenin; William Clendenin; J. Barnett Grimes; James B. Grimes; Martha Hogsett; Lydia McComb; Lucy M. Nottingham; Rebecca Overholt; Francis Pennell; Rouhen Pennell; Lorana Smith Clark; Caroline Scales; Robert D. Silva; Martha E. Silva; Sarben Silva; Russell Silva; John Silva; Marie Selavens; Joseph A. Thorpe; Felicia Seldomridge McCoy; Ruhama Cleek; Lina L. Cochran; Mary Bartlett; Boyd Bartlett; Elizabeth Bartlett; Clara Bartlett; Mary Bartlett; Elizabeth E. Moore; and Samuel Auldridge. (It is possible that an occasional name could have belonged at a slightly later date than 1879).

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS; TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH AT THE PRESENT TIME:

Sunday School Superintendents that are remembered, or a record has been found of their serving, are as follows: S. A. Shiftlet, 1884; Joseph S. Smith, 1885; John S. Moore, 1886-90, 1895-97; Frank Moore, 1898, 1901-02; John Cleek, 1900; M. F. Ruckman, 1890, 1903; Lee Moore, 1912, 1916; E. S. McClure, 1913-15; E. P. Kramer, 1917-18; Fred Waugh, 1919; H. F. Arbogast; Mrs W. A. Arbogast, 1926-32, 1937-50; Richard Auldridge, 1934; Mrs. Wilbur E. Moore, 1935-36; and E. S. Newman is the superintendent at the present time - April, 1954. (The dates shown may indicate only a part of the term, or terms, served by some of them).

The trustees of Marvin Chapel Church at the present time, April 1954, are: W. A. Arbogast; C. W. Auldridge; Boyd Dilley; Joe Kramer; C. P. Pritchard; and W. O. Ruckman.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

33.

Some miscellaneous things concerning the church are: a bride and groom attending the dedication of Marvin Chapel in 1878 were Mr. and Mrs. Millard F. Ruckman; the first marriage in the church was that of Mathews Ruckman and Mary L. (Mollie) Hogsett, January 20, 1881 - only about six or seven marriages have been in the church; the first funeral was that of Orin Slaven, April 13, 1898 - previous to this, it did not seem to be the custom to have a funeral, or memorial service, until sometime after the person had been buried. This custom probably arose from the fact that the circuit-riding preacher only came around at certain times of the year.

According to the record of John S. Moore as secretary of the Sunday School, the problems of the Sunday School in 1884 were not too different from those of today. His advice to young men was not to let a little rain scare them into staying at home, and he deplored the fact that so many teachers were often absent without leave. He also asked people to remember that Sunday School started at 9:30.

Other miscellaneous items are: Lee V. Ruckman was president of the Epworth League in 1899; the woodhouse was built in 1915; some of the dates that the church was painted were 1878, 1898, about 1926, about 1938, 1953, and perhaps others; the interior was papered in 1915, 1930, and about 1946; money was raised in 1930 to fence the church lot; electric lights were put in the church about 1931, by Paul Simmons.

During the days of the song services it was not unusual for the Marvin Chapel choir, male quartet, and "string band" - all made up mostly of the young people - to visit other churches having similar services; the young people of Marvin Chapel had a musical at Hillsboro in the spring of 1934 - proceeds for a sink in the parsonage at Seebert, and to buy hymn books for the church; it was recently noticed that the plastering lathes of the church were split rather than sawed, and it has been recalled that oxen were used when hauling the pine lumber from Cummings Creek when the church was built. Preaching service was held in the Ruckman Schoolhouse November 8, 1953, as the new floor in the church was being finished. (Many of the

things concerning the church have been done during the month of November).

34.

Can you imagine the Marvin Chapel neighborhood if there was not the mingled, pleasant fragrance of pine and hemlock at the cemetery; or you attended a church service and no one would speak to you; or at Christmas time you could not hear the old favorite hymn, "Ring the Merry Bells"?

THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION:

The Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the building of Marvin Chapel Church was celebrated November 29, 1953. The weather was cold, the temperature being down near zero in the early morning, with some snow on the ground. The early part of the day was clear, but later it became cloudy. A rather large congregation attended although the church was not filled.

The church was beautifully decorated with flowers which were brought in memory of some of the first trustees of the church. These were furnished by their descendants. A baptismal bowl was later given in memory of one of the trustees whose descendants were not known by the decorating committee before the celebration.

The occasion was considered to be quite a success. This was due in part, at least, to the exceptionally fine cooperation and planning of the various committees and of the people in general under the leadership of the pastor, Rev. Frank A. Johnson.

The speaker for the morning service was Rev. T. E. Painter, a former pastor of the church. His subject was "Seventy-five Years and Beyond".

At noon a most bountiful dinner, including hot tea and coffee, was served in the schoolhouse. The anniversary cake, brought by Mrs. Lloyd D. Wilson, was cut by Mrs. Carrie Patterson of Marlinton, and Dr. Marvin C. Smith of Hillsboro. These two were the only ones attending the anniversary celebration who had been here when the church was dedicated in 1878.

In the afternoon service the history of the church was read by F. Wilmer Ruckman. A short letter was read from Rev. Lee V. Ruckman expressing his regrets at

being unable to attend the anniversary celebration, and a short talk was given by Rev. Quade R. Arbogast. Both of these men are sons of this church. The main speaker of the afternoon was Rev. C. C. Lambert, who had served here in former years. His subject was "The Garden of Memories". He read from the forty-eighth chapter of Genesis, and took his text from Proverbs 10:7 - "The memory of the just is blessed".

The occasion could not fail to bring back memories of other years, and of those who were no longer here to take part in the fellowship of the day. However, we must not continue to look to the past other than as a guide to the future. The keynote for the present and future was sounded in the closing hymn of the day - "Onward Christian Soldiers". We should each strive so that in 1978, the time for the hundredth anniversary of Marvin Chapel, it could well be said that the last twenty-five years have been the greatest of them all!

----- THE END -----